

Reviews of Recent Books



Infant Nutrition in the Subtropics and Tropics (World Health Organization: Monograph Series No. 29), by D. B. Jelliffe, Geneva, 1955, pp. 237, \$5.00.

This book was written for the World Health Organization after a tour of the Middle and Far East, the main object of which was to examine methods of infant feeding. The author has, however, extended his scope to include as far as possible information from all parts of the tropics and subtropics. He is very well fitted to do this, having worked in Africa and the West Indies before making this survey for WHO.

The book is divided into six chapters: the first is an account of the evolution of infant feeding in the Western world. This is followed by a description of infant feeding practices in tropical and subtropical countries. The third chapter is an analysis of the nutritional diseases of infants, and then come two chapters on the improvement of infant feeding and the prevention of kwashiorkor. The last section deals with nutrition education in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Centers.

To the medical reader who is already familiar, at least in outline, with the nutritional problems of the tropics, the most important and interesting parts of the book are the first and the last. In the first chapter Dr. Jelliffe outlines what might be called his philosophy of infant feeding. His approach is at once scholarly and practical. His ideas are based on a great width of reading, in which very varied sources have been drawn upon—anthropological and historical as well as purely medical. The main point that emerges is that to wean a baby on the milk of animals such as the cow is an exceptional rather than a normal practice. This is a Western custom of comparatively recent origin, and is therefore by no means the necessary or sole solution to the problem of infant feeding in the tropics. The policy advocated for countries where there is no indigenous and widely available supply of animal milk is to prolong breast feeding for at least two years. In other words, the mother should be looked upon as a human cow, and therefore she must be fed accordingly.

The improvement of the baby's and of the mother's nutrition therefore goes together. Both are the concern of the Maternal and Child Health Center. In the last chapter, on the methods of nutrition education in these centers, the author stresses very strongly the importance of paying attention to local conditions and customs, and of enlisting the active cooperation of the mothers, instead of treating them as ignorant inferiors. Some interesting examples of successful techniques are

given: for instance, in a Mexican village it was found that what the people particularly wanted was to be taught arithmetic; when this need was filled their confidence and cooperation were established—an indirect but none the less effective approach.

The description of the clinical aspects and prevention of infantile malnutrition in the tropics covers more conventional ground, but nevertheless Dr. Jelliffe manages to bring out a number of interesting points that need further investigation. It is surprising, for instance, to learn that rickets is extremely common in the countries of the Middle East. Much attention is given to nutritional anemia in infants; here, perhaps, the author lays too much stress on iron deficiency, and too little on deficiency of protein as a probable cause, although the work of Altmann is quoted.

Undue reliance is perhaps placed on published figures for amino acid requirements, which can only be rough approximations, and the best authorities are not cited. The figure Dr. Jelliffe quotes for the infant's protein requirement—3–4 g per kg body weight per day—is almost certainly too high, and may do harm by setting an impossible target.

These, however, are minor criticisms. This is a careful, stimulating, and well-balanced book. It should prove most useful to nonmedical as well as medical workers who are concerned with the important and urgent problem of infant nutrition in the tropics.

J. C. WATERLOW

The Biliary Tract, by Julian A. Sterling, The Williams and Wilkins Co., Baltimore, 1955, pp. 424, \$10.00.

The author, who has had extensive clinical and investigative experience in problems dealing with the anatomy, physiology, and pathology of the biliary tract, has written this monograph by himself, with the exception of the chapter on anesthesia. The advantages of having a single author are evident in the uniformity of style of writing, the continuity, and the lack of duplication.

This monograph encompasses all phases of study of the biliary tract. It deals with anatomy, physiology, laboratory studies, and radiology, as well as the medical and surgical aspects of its diseases. Where possible, the author employs tables for statistical studies, analysis of laboratory data, and for differential diagnosis. These are well done and will be helpful to those who wish to seek out such information quickly. The illustrations are abundant and are frequently supplemented by anatomic sketches which help to clarify many details.

The author employs a terse, almost telegraphic, style of writing. Although this makes for ease of reading, in some instances it causes ambiguity or uncertainty as to the intended meaning. On controversial matters, Dr. Sterling quotes liberally from the theories or beliefs of authorities or investigators who hold opposing views. While such impartiality is commendable, this reviewer feels that the author should invoke his editorial prerogatives or at least indicate how his own experiences influence his thinking on a given subject. One might further suggest that additional simplification could be attained by allowing discarded theories to remain undisturbed.

All too often a medical text is obsolete by the time it reaches the reader, but in this respect Dr. Sterling is to be commended for the currency of his material. Such topics as drug-induced hepatitis (particularly that due to thorazine), biligraphin radiography, therapy of pancreatitis, and recent advances in surgery of the biliary tree are more than adequately covered.

The author is to be congratulated for providing students and clinicians with an excellent presentation of the subject matter which reads like a novel and yet is pithy and comprehensive. STANLEY H. LORBER

How to Reduce Surely and Safely, by H. Pollack with A. D. Morse, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, 1955, pp. 157, \$2.95.

This book offers a sane, interesting, convincing presentation of the need for, and problems of, maintaining ideal body weight. It is keyed to the individual reader and should be a valuable adjunct to weight control programs. Although the major emphasis is in connection with safe and sane reducing, the last chapter is devoted to the problems of the underweight; furthermore, sections on assessing ideal weight, counting calories, and menu planning can be used equally effectively by the over- or underweight.

Technical aspects of energy needs, such as basal metabolism, radiation losses, caloric value of food, and costs of exercise, are treated in interesting, accurate, nontechnical language.

The reader will receive help in assessing the ideal weight for his sex, height, age, and activity. If weight reduction or gain is indicated by deviations of actual weight in excess of ± 10 per cent of this ideal weight, menu patterns providing diets ranging from 800 to 3000 calories daily will be helpful. Other valuable aids are: a calorie counter (caloric value of individual servings of foods); a listing of 100-calorie portions of foods; a list of foods of *high fat* content; and recipes for low calorie desserts, salads, soups, and fruit punches with the actual caloric value of each listed.

The reviewer believes that this book could be recommended to persons wishing to gain or lose weight with full assurance that they should thereby gain the confidence that weight control is desirable and possible. The sections on the importance of good nutrition are convincing and valuable for readers of normal weight.

In future editions, it would be an improvement to list nude heights and weights (rather than height with shoes and weight, as ordinarily dressed) since clothing weight varies from season to season and height of heels in women's shoes is quite variable. The text recommends that persons undertaking active weight loss or gain should weigh weekly before breakfast and recommends in addition attention to maintenance of desirable weight at 25 years of age. Such a preventive program would be enhanced by regular use of scales within the home.

JANICE M. SMITH

Transactions of the Fifth Meeting of the International Society of Geographical Pathology, Washington, D. C., September 6-11, 1954. S. Karger, Basel, 1955, pp. 385-950, Swiss francs, 67.60.

About two years ago, a unique conference was held in Washington, D. C. The International Society of Geographical Pathology met to consider the problems of cancer from a global viewpoint. In this multilingual book of more than 500 pages, experts from all over the world discuss epidemiologic and ecologic aspects of cancer of the stomach, liver, breast, uterus, and lung. Among the presentations are two of special interest to readers of the Journal: "Nutritional States as Causal Factors of Cancer" by Professor J. W. P. Davies of Kampala, Uganda, and "Nutritional States in the Causation of Primary Liver Cancer" by Dr. Charles Berman, South Africa.

Much of the book makes fascinating reading. The differences in incidence of new growths in different races and in different parts of the world have always been a curious mystery which investigators have felt may furnish a major clue to the riddle of cancer. These papers furnish the best available information on the subject today. This book will be both interesting and informative to workers in oncology, public health, epidemiology, and nutrition. S. O. WAIFE

Books received for review by the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION are acknowledged in this column. As far as practicable those of special interest are selected, as space permits, for a more extensive review.

Tomorrow's Food (ed. 2), by J. Rorty and N. P. Norman, The Devin-Adair Co., New York, 1956, pp. 297, \$3.95.

Infant Metabolism, World Health Organization, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1956, pp. 435, \$8.00.

Hutchison's Food and the Principles of Dietetics (ed. 11), revised by V. H. Mottram and G. Graham, Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., London, and Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, 1956, pp. 630, \$8.25.

A Pictorial History of Medicine, by O. L. Bettman, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, 1956, pp. 318 \$9.50.

Alcoholism as a Medical Problem, edited by H. D. Kruse. Hoeber-Harper, New York, 1956, pp. 102, \$3.00.